

Behaviors Related to Sex & Sexuality

PRESCHOOL CHILDREN

NATURAL & HEALTHY

Touches/rubs own genitals when diapers are being changed, when going to sleep, when tense or afraid.

Explores difference between males and females, boys, and girls.

Touches the “private parts” of familiar adults and children.

Asks about the genitals, breast, intercourse, and babies.

Likes to be nude.
May show others his/her genitals.

Interested in watching people doing bathroom functions.

Plays doctor while inspecting other’s bodies.

Puts something in own genitals and rectum one time for curiosity or exploration.

Plays house, acts out roles of Mommy and Daddy.

OF CONCERN

Insists on touching/rubbing genitals in public after being told many times not to do this.

Repeatedly asks questions about genitals and asking to see others’ genitals.

Touches the “private parts” of an adult not in the family, unknown child, or familiar people after being redirected. Asks to be touched themselves.

Repeatedly asks answered questions about reproduction, sex, and body parts.

Wants to be nude in public after the parent repeatedly and consistently redirects behavior and sets appropriate boundaries.

Interest in watching bathroom functions does not wane in days/weeks.

Frequently plays doctor after setting appropriate boundaries. Secretly plays doctor in private.

Put something in genitals or rectum of self or others after being told “no”.

Humping other children with clothes on.

SEEK GUIDANCE

Touches/rubs self to the exclusion of normal childhood activities. Hurts own genitals by touching/rubbing.

Forces or demands others to show their genitals.

Sneakily touches adults. Forcefully touches others and demands that others touch him/her inappropriately.

Asks unfamiliar people for sex education and explanation. Sexual knowledge too detailed for child’s age.

Refuses to put on clothes. Repeatedly exposes genitals to others.

Refuses to leave people alone in the bathroom. Forces way into the bathroom.

Forces another child to play doctor or to take off his/her clothes.

Any coercion, force, pain in putting something in genitals or rectum of self or another child.

Simulated or real intercourse without clothes; oral sex.

Adapted from “Understanding Children’s Sexual Behavior” by Toni Cavanagh Johnson, Ph.D.



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